



The idea of an art as something merely aesthetic; that is, as something with no purpose beyond that of creating a pleasurable sensation in the observer, is a thoroughly modern invention. It is as foreign to the traditional mode of thought as the related idea of a craft as a mere method of "production", the sole aim of which is to manufacture useful articles as efficiently as possible. In every traditional society from the Incas to the Japanese, from the European Middle Ages to the African tribes, the primary content of both art and craft is intellectual, or doctrinal. The tools, the methods, the traditional styles and patterns of the craft all have a profound symbolical meaning, which "actualised" within the context of the authentic practice of the "mystery", become the constituents of a contemplative path toward spiritual realisation. The term "mystery" is not used idly. Until recently, every craft was called by its practitioners a mystery, as any student of English literature will be aware; and passing out of the apprentice stage of one's training took place by way of a true Initiation far more solemn and portentous than the rather messy horse-play that still accompanies the occasion in a few of the older crafts today. At one time, this was merely a high-spirited release of nervous tension after the ordeal of the Initiation itself. Having passed this Initiation, one was truly set upon the Path which was the particular craft in question.

Such a craft was a worthwhile "living" or life's-work, for its first aim was to fulfil the purpose for which souls are incarnate in human form in the first place - to return to God. Not every soul, of course, is destined to become fully "realised" in one lifetime; nevertheless, the priorities are correct; one is facing in the right direction. At death one should at least be a few steps further forward than one was upon entering the world.

It is only when the true meaning of craft has been forgotten that an "industry" in the modern sense of the term can arise. It is craft stripped of everything which relates to the supernatural; a mere mechanical production of

goods by the cheapest and quickest means possible, with no regard to the spiritual effect of the work upon the worker. In a society based on an "industry" of this sort, nobody, from the chain-belt operator to the managing director, has a worthwhile living. All of them, however many goods and however much money they may be amassing in this life, are from the standpoint not even of eternity, but just of the next couple of centuries in the life of their souls, wasting their time. And they know it.

There has never been a time in which so many people have been stricken and oppressed by the sheer futility and meaninglessness of life. The advertising and entertainment industries pour out an unending stream of novelties in order to maintain the attention of the jaded masses. No material pleasure can hold its attraction for more than a brief time, so there is a constant demand for more, bigger, better, never, stranger or even more disgusting novelties to replace the ones that were in vogue the day before. The level of psychiatric disorder is alarmingly high, and psychiatrists report that the main underlying problem is "lack of life content" - meaninglessness, apathy, despair.

Since the time of William Morris, there have been numerous attempts to return to a more meaningful way of life; to practise traditional arts and crafts, to live the "simple life", to restore satisfaction to everyday activity. All these attempts, however, are doomed to failure for one simple reason. While they reject the symptoms of the modern malaise, they have not rejected the disease itself. Indeed, they have failed to understand what it is. In trying to restore life-satisfaction by bringing back the mere outward forms of certain older ways of living, they are like the villagers who tried to keep the spring from passing by fencing the cuckoo to prevent it from flying away. It was not the crafts themselves which made the traditional way of life satisfying. It was the inner meaning which they embodied. It is often supposed by modernists that the Industrial Revolution came about because of new technical knowledge. Actually history makes nonsense of this idea. All the technological innovations of the first stages of the Industrial Revolution could have been made at almost any time in history; but it was only when the real meaning of the crafts had been lost that anybody would have thought of making them. The Industrial Revolution was the product not of a new knowledge, but of a new ignorance. It is this

ignorance which is the real disease. The loss of the crafts and the traditional way of life are nothing more than symptoms. And it is the disease which must be cured if we are to recover.

In practice, this means rediscovering the intellectual or metaphysical content of the crafts and learning to practice them not merely as scaled-down forms of "industry" - mere means to physical ends, albeit somewhat more picturesque and satisfying means - but as authentic contemplative paths. But this is not quite so simple as it may seem, for we are immediately confronted by a double-headed difficulty, which may be summed up in the single word Traditio. We have used the word in its Latin form in order to draw attention to its actual meaning. In modern English usage, "tradition" has come to have a vague meaning, roughly equivalent to "custom" or "convention" or "anything-over-fifty-years-old" (or in some contexts, even over five years old!). In all traditional societies it has a meaning far more precise, and immeasurably more important. It means literally something "passed-down" from the Golden Age - the primordial time when "Heaven touched earth". The techniques of the crafts are not mere human "inventions", but Divinely-instituted rituals. They are passed down through a full-scale initiatory process by ritually qualified teachers in an unbroken chain (tradition) from the beginning. The two aspects of the problem, then, are firstly that no merely human reconstruction of traditional craft-doctrine will be of any value, and secondly that once the chain has been broken, there will no longer be any teachers qualified to carry out the ritual transmission of the Mysteries.

However, in the English matriarchal tradition, the craft mysteries are still transmitted. There is an unbroken line of Banyas or craft-mistresses going back to the earliest period of the manifestation of "human" souls on earth. We may turn, then, to the universal matriarchal tradition in its English form for examples of the practice of craft in the true traditional manner.

As a case in point, we may take the craft of music. It may be objected that music is an art rather than a craft; but traditional philosophy draws no

distinction between the two. Art, moreover, gives a wider scope for comparison between the traditional and the modern perspectives, for modern art cannot help but have some intellectual content, whereas in "industry", all is subjugated to blank utilitarianism. The cardinal difference between traditional and modern art is that the modern world conceives art as having no purpose except to please (or at any rate to arouse some sensation in) the recipient; whereas the traditional doctrine holds that art must be founded upon metaphysical principles and must communicate the primordial Truths of existence in order to be of the smallest value. This is encapsulated in the traditional dictum: "Ars sine scientia nihil", art without science is nothing. But the science in question is, of course, not the merely physical observations which have usurped that name in the modern world, but a knowledge of the underlying metaphysical principles of being. This understood, let us proceed to a brief examination of the art of music.

Sound is of two kinds: the heard and the unheard. Heard sound is that manifested upon the physical plane and perceived by our ears. Unheard sound is the primordial expression of creation, the "music of the spheres", the harmonies inherent in the single creative Word spoken by God Herself at the beginning. These harmonies ramify out from the original Note, manifesting the entire range of the Archetypes - the perfect, unfallen order of creation, of which all the lower orders, the physical included, are but reflections. The purpose of the art of music is to organise heard sound into a perfect echo of the unheard. In this, music resembles every other authentic art; for all art has as its aim the depiction not of material "facts" (whether physical, emotional or mental), but of the underlying Realities of which the phenomena of this world are but broken and imperfect shadows. Art is essentially contemplative. The first task of the artist is to see the Real in contemplative vision. Her second is to depict it in the materials of the shadow-world which we inhabit. Tradition provides her with the means to do this. All the stylised art-forms of traditional societies, from matriarchal Crete to Pharaonic Egypt to Gothic Germany were means for the expression of inner Reality. When a traditional artist paints a tree, she is not attempting to mimic the purely physical characteristics of the ash on the village green; she is seeking to capture the essential ash-ness inherent in it; the Divine Idea of ash that has existed in the mind of God

before the dawn of time, and will continue to exist in the Real world when this planet and all its trees are ash of another sort.

The modern supposition that traditional artists "did not know how to draw true perspective" reflects the same provincial stupidity as the belief that they could not have created an industrial revolution; while modern "realistic" art, which aims merely to reflect material "facts" (physical ones in paint, "psychological" ones in novels, etc.) is an aberration of exactly the same order as modern industry itself.

The final loss of traditional art took place in the so-called Renaissance. Beginning with the most "concrete" arts of painting and sculpture, a spectacular efflorescence of "realism" replaced the stylistic art-forms of the Middle Ages. These forms cannot but attract our admiration, firstly because material nature is a reflection of the Real, and an art which faithfully reproduces it, although but a "copy of a copy", contains something of its divine quality; secondly because they were the product of a starburst of creative energy released by the sudden relaxation of traditional restraints. It is like a well-disciplined academy suddenly taken over by a principal who believes in a relaxation of all discipline. At first her scheme will work well. Nobody will run riot, because the discipline of previous years will have become second nature. For a brief period one will have the best of both worlds - all the advantages of discipline with none of its drawbacks. But as the customs of the past fade and a new generation which has never known the old regime arises, order begins to break down and chaos supervenes. In the same way, the age of Raphael and Michaelangelo gave place to the increasingly effete manifestations of the Baroque and Rococo, the sentimentality of Romanticism, and then Surrealism, Dada, Cubism. I hear that some gallery has recently paid for an exhibition of "kinetic art" consisting of a man vomiting into a bucket.

Music, due to its more "abstract" character was protected for a certain time from this degenerative process; but this was no more than a temporary reprieve. While it is true that Renaissance music adhered far more closely to authentic traditional patterns than its sister arts, we have today reached a point where all music being composed (with a few insignificant exceptions)

can be divided into the slick, meretricious "popular" variety, and something called "serious music", which is so wholly devoid of either meaning or beauty that short pieces of it have to be sandwiched into programmes of Beethoven and Bruckner in order to induce any concert-goer to listen to it. It may be noted in passing that the two great arguments invariably produced by advocates of the "new music" cancel one another out. The first is "Oh, but all new music is disliked at first; look at Tannhäuser." The second is "We really should be getting used to Berg (or Webern, etc.) by now - after all, it is hardly new, it's been going for fifty years." Precisely. Beethoven's ninth may have been hissed at the first performance; but it was accepted within a couple of years. Berg et al have not received the wholehearted acceptance of the public in half a century, and there is no reason to suppose that they ever will.

But the bankruptcy of modern music, like the bankruptcy of all the arts, has its roots many years earlier, in the loss of its guiding metaphysical principles and the consequent gradual descent into chaos and futility. In other words, it may be accounted for by its failure to echo the unheard Music.

In the traditional music of the West, a single note of unchanging pitch is sounded throughout. The melody departs from it and returns to it at the end and at frequent intervals throughout the composition. It is an expression or manifestation of the potentialities inherent in this primordial and continuous note; the "tonic", as it is called. This actual sounding of the tonic throughout the piece is still practised in the music of, say, the bagpipes, and to a lesser degree in the music of such droned stringed instruments as the scheitholt, the langeleik and the Appalachian dulcimer. Where the tonic is not actually sounded, the melody is nevertheless developed in such a way that it is still effectively present and governing the music.

The drone, sounding before, during and after the development of the melody corresponds to the Mother, the timeless and unchanging Absolute, while the melody itself represents all the flux and diversity of nature, emerging from Her as its divine Source and returning to Her at the close of its cycle of existence. This process also reflects the emergence of the Daughter from the Mother, the "play" of the events of Her life, and Her final heuresis or re-

union. And as it reflects the Daughter, Who is the perfect Soul, so, on a lesser plane, it reflects the separation (or fall) of every soul from union with Godhead, her journey through the vicissitudes of successive incarnations and her final reunion, realisation or salvation. The tonic itself emerges from and returns into silence, even as God the Mother, who is pure Being, emerges from and returns into Absolute Deity, the Dark Mother, who is beyond being and unbeing.

In counterpoint which retains an essentially modal character, and in harmony where the ground remains unbroken, the pattern, although more complex, is essentially the same. Here there are several manifestations out of the principal Note instead of one; and their intricate interrelations form the character of the music. Each part affects and is affected by the others; we find ourselves in a world of opposites and dualities, night and day, pleasure and pain, yin and yang. A world of multiplicity and of seeming "accidents"; and yet every event is directed by the inherent logic of the composition - the destiny, or moira, which determines all earthly events; and beneath it all, either heard or unheard, continues the principal Note which underlies all the "play" of the manifest universe. The Unity which all the movement of multiplicity is, either consciously or unconsciously, seeking.

Now once this principle has been lost, we are quickly confronted with forms of music which modulate, changing from one key or tonality to another. The unheard tonic is actually altered during the course of the composition. At first there were only brief forays out of the key, with a final return being regarded as imperative. Later, modulation became a dominant feature of music, and the "well-tempered" scale, in which all keys are interchangeable because they differ only in pitch, was invented in order to facilitate this. At a later stage, we have the logical development (or reductio ad absurdum) of this in atonal music which deliberately rejects all tonality as a matter of principle, or rather of counter-principle, thus producing that music so alien to the divine (and therefore to the human) Norm as to be wholly unattractive to the normal listener.

Now it may be noted that once the ground is broken, it ceases to be an unchanging drone and becomes simply another melody. In other words, the immutable-

ity of the Absolute is denied, and all is reduced to relativity, flux and transience. This, it will be seen, corresponds perfectly not only to the pseudo-doctrine of "materialism" (which denies all things beyond the flux of the physical), but also to nearly all the tendencies of specifically modern and anti-traditional thought: the "evolutionism" which seeks to reduce all existence to "a process of becoming"; the "dynamism" which regards action as being superior to contemplation; the "anti-dogmatism" which wishes to see all statements about ultimate Reality reduced to the level of "opinion" and "experiment"; the entire ideology of "progress" which permeates every aspect of modern life and thought. It is certainly no coincidence that although the composers of the last few centuries have had no conception of the nature, or even the existence, of the principles which they have been violating, modern music has produced, in musical language, a perfect paraphrase of the errors which dominate and determine modern society.

The tonic which generates a given composition may be any one of the seven notes of the natural scale, and because the intervals between the tones of the scale are not identical, a different pattern is formed by the scale depending upon which note begins it; thus there are seven different scales, or "modes" as they are called, each with its own peculiar character. It is well known that all the authentic folk music of this country is modal.

Each of the modes has its own particular effect upon the mental state of its hearer; this fact is admitted by the soberest of modern musicologists, although they are able to offer no "rational" explanation for it. Ancient writers, who still had some access to the older matriarchal traditions are able to go into much more detail. Plato encourages certain modes as beneficial to the moral fibre of his ideal republic, while others he would exclude as being corrupting or effeminate. Pythagoras used music in both physical and psychological healing, using music in certain modes to help to counteract conditions of an opposite character. None of these writers, however, has left a systematic exposition of the characters of the modes and their underlying doctrine. Fortunately, this has been preserved in the matriarchal tradition itself.

Each mode, in fact, is governed by one of the seven great Genies; manifest-

ations of God Herself governing the categories of being; they are related to the seven planets of the ancient system. In some traditions they have been called "goddesses", but in modern English this term carries misleading implications. "Angels" might be a better rendering, but it is still inadequate; the more so since an "angel" in Madrian usage is strictly the servant of a Genia. The correspondences of the modes are as follows:

<u>Classical name</u>	<u>Folk name</u>	<u>Tonic</u>	<u>Genia</u>	<u>Planet</u>	<u>Character</u>
Ionian	Do	C	Theia	Sun	Generosity, Energy, Heroism
Dorian	Re	D	Phoebe	Moon	Purity, Peace, Childlikeness
Phrygian	Me	E	Nike	Mars	Discord, Courage, Combat
Lydian	Fa	F	Metis	Mercury	Wisdom, Trickery, Unworldliness
Mixolydian	So	G	Themis	Jupiter	Harmony, Joy, Humour
Aeolian	La	A	Tethys	Venus	Love, Peace, Gentleness
Locrian	Te	B	Rhea	Saturn	Death, Darkness, Mystery

The characters given here are obviously rather brief. It will be noted also that the "planetary" Geniae govern the modes in the same order that they govern the days of the week. Some books on music state that the Locrian mode was rarely used, others that it was never used. Especially in the Christian ecclesiastical usage of the Middle Ages, it was usual to speak of the six modes rather than the seven, although it is obvious that seven scales must naturally exist. The fact is that the Locrian mode was never used for everyday music-making, its dark and mysterious power being far too dangerous for ordinary use (particularly in ages when the substance of the world, both psychic and material, was far more sensitive to subtle influences than it is today). But a number of traditional melodies in the Locrian mode were (and are) used in certain highly specific ritual contexts, which cannot be disclosed here. The use of the mode was not preserved in Christianity.

Returning to our previous explanation of music as a paradigm of cosmic manifestation, we may now see that music in each of the modes will represent one particular aspect of that manifestation, which will be further modified by the precise nature of the music itself, just as the archetypal Ash-ness is

modified into the individual tree on the village green. In traditional ritual dance-drama, each scene will be set in a particular mode, which establishes the spiritual "domain" in which the action takes place.

The "central" mode is the Ionian. In the table above, the modes themselves are ranked in Ionian order, as is customary. In modern non-modal music, the major key is identical with the Ionian mode. It is the familiar do-re-me scale in which most ordinary tunes are set. The centrality of this mode is natural, since the Sun in its highest aspect represents the Mother Herself, Who governs all the Geniae, even as the physical sun forms the central organising principle for all the planets. The name Theia can be taken to mean simply "God", and it is possible for Ionian music to be taken as being in no particular mode; that is, as an expression of Divine manifestation pure and simple, under no special Genia-aspect. Nevertheless, the Lady Theia is a very distinct personality in her own right who must take her place alongside her six sisters if the full richness and diversity of the Divine Self-expression is to be perceived. On one level, the fall of modal music echoes the puritan rejection of the cult of the saints and angels (which contained the remnants of the old matriarchal worship; particularly in the cult of the Virgin) in favour of a one-dimensional father-god, who quickly dwindled into the insipid "supreme being" of the eighteenth century. The last vestige of this bloodless creature is still worshipped in the modern atheist cult under the name of Progress/Evolution. He created the world. He gives it what little it has of meaning and direction. He even occasionally displays a little of the old autocrat in the oft-repeated incantation "You can't stand in the way of Progress", ritually chanted in defence of every modern atrocity.

The true, traditional modal music, like every authentic art, is, on the contrary, a reflection of cosmic manifestation in all its exuberant abundance. It is the Song of God which has become the world. And yet, like every authentic Mystery, it does not stop there, but leads those who have ears to hear beyond the song and beyond the world, into the arms of God, into Her very Heart, "from whence all comes, whereto all must return."